

# NEVADA

Silver&Blue

The magazine of the University of Nevada, Reno

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## From the President

# International education: Pathway to a more connected world

Back in the 16th century, the essayist Michel de Montaigne got it right when he wrote about the value of interacting with the rest of the world.

Montaigne believed that to see only within the borders of one's country was to be intellectually self-limiting. When we seek out experiences and perspectives that go well beyond our borders, we afford ourselves of a great opportunity, which he described as the ability to "rub and sharpen our minds against others."

It's interesting that Montaigne wrote those words in the pre-Thomas Friedman, pre-"World Is Flat," pre-Internet, pre-global economy days of the French Renaissance.

Yet, his words ring with an even more singular resonance today—particularly for college campuses. After all, we must prepare students to work in increasingly diverse workplaces and compete globally.

International education is nothing new to what we do, although college campuses today are experiencing a historic renaissance in this realm.

Throughout the country, and on our campus, international education is on the rise again following the bleak period in the months following the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. A record 623,805 international students studied in the U.S. in 2008, according to figures collected by the Institute of International Education. The trend over the decade for study abroad programs has been just as encouraging. U.S. student participation in such programs has increased by almost 150 percent over the decade.

On our campus, we have nearly 700 students, 250 researchers and faculty from more than 70 nations, according to the Office of International Students and Scholars. An increasing number of University of Nevada, Reno students are participating in programs for a semester, summer or year abroad through the University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC, which is headquartered on our campus). USAC reports that 700 University of Nevada, Reno students participate in their program each year.

What does this all mean? By welcoming international students to our campus—and when, just as importantly, we encourage our students to study for a semester abroad—we become a more complete institution.

Our native-born students benefit from sharing and learning with students from foreign lands. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, our students come to the important realization that the world is a polychromatic, exciting, dynamic place. As the world continues to "flatten," the vast majority of our students will be asked to live, work and succeed in an increasingly globalized world. It is a place that has sped along at a dizzying pace over the past 15 years, as half of the world's population has joined the world's free economic system. I am happy to report that for many of our students, their initial experiences with such an interconnected globe are happening right here on our campus.

Our international students benefit from the equation as well. Fortified by an intellectual curiosity that never wavers, they arrive on our campus often facing language or cultural barriers. And yet they show a capacity of spirit that is truly remarkable; they welcome us as much as we welcome them. When they leave our campus with undergraduate or graduate degrees, they, like all of our graduates, are prepared to provide that elusive transformative spark that our world constantly needs.

Craig Barrett, the retired chairman of the board of Intel and a former Stanford University professor, once recounted the story of a fortune cookie he opened at a favorite restaurant in his hometown of Palo Alto, Calif. He found words that could've just as easily been written by Montaigne back in the 16th century. "The world," Barrett said the fortune cookie read, "is always ready to receive talent with open arms."

So it is with our campus, where international experience and international education help all of our students hone the habits that will serve them in a world they will one day make whole.

Sincerely,

**Milton D. Glick**  
President

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*Carmelo Urza, director of USAC, President Glick and Susan Bender, director of the Office of International Students and Scholars.*

Photo by Theresa Danna-Douglas